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MORT L. BIXLEREditor

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BUTLER'S BEAUMONT STORY.

Under date of January 24, Bion H. Butler, special representative of the Pittsburg Times, writes from this city a very pretty story about the responsibility for the discovery of the great oil gusher. Mr. Butler also takes occasion to write in a manner common to provincial Eastern newspaper correspondents, who for the first time get away from their native fastness and discover something to which they have not been accustomed, and who seem to think that they must note the exception and not the rule. We reprint the most of Mr. Butler's story, as it will afford our people the means of seeing themselves in the absurd manner Mr. Butler pictures them to his readers who are supposed to believe all they read: Beaumont, Tex., January 24.—The discovery of oil on the Sabine prairies is the result of two lucky accidents.

In the first place, when Captain A. F. Lucas commenced to drill it was not oil he was after, but salt or sulphur. That he found something more valuable is owing to the fact that he recognized the indications when they presented themselves. This was the second accident. The first one happened to Joseph Jefferson, that genial old Rip Van Winkle who had no more idea of figuring as a factor in finding oil than he had in his trip to the mountain of finding old Hendrick Hudson's crew.

Jefferson has a fine home near New Iberia in Louisiana. Some years ago he took into his head that a deep well ought to find mineral water and he engaged some New Orleans water well drillers to sink a hole for him. They got down a few hundred feet and got fast in the gravel and quicksand. They had three strings of pipe in the hole, a 6 inch, a 4 inch and a 2 inch. Gravel had forced the pipes and filled the space between and the drillers could not open the hole. They abandoned it. Jefferson knew Captain Lucas, an educated German mining engineer who has lived in the United States some twenty years, and Lucas was consulted.

He thought he could clear the hole and finish the well, as he had considerable knowledge of drilling. He succeeded in pulling the three pipes fast as they were together and in pushing the hole further down. He had not gone far until he noticed the water which came out of the hole was a milky white and that a sediment settled where the water stood. He examined it and found it to be salt. He had struck a vein of rock salt of remarkable purity. The salt industry in the vicinity is now large, but Jefferson still has no mineral water.

When Captain Lucas came over to Beaumont a few years ago he was impressed with the apparent similarity of the geological formation, and with Jefferson's well fresh in his mind and the vast sulphur deposits of Louisiana also before him, he concluded to try for one or the other. Indications of sulphur abound in the country. Captain Lucas drilled one well and found no salt and no sulphur, but he found some gas and, I imagine, some oil. This he will not talk about. But his well met with trouble, and he concluded to take a new start and drill for oil this time.

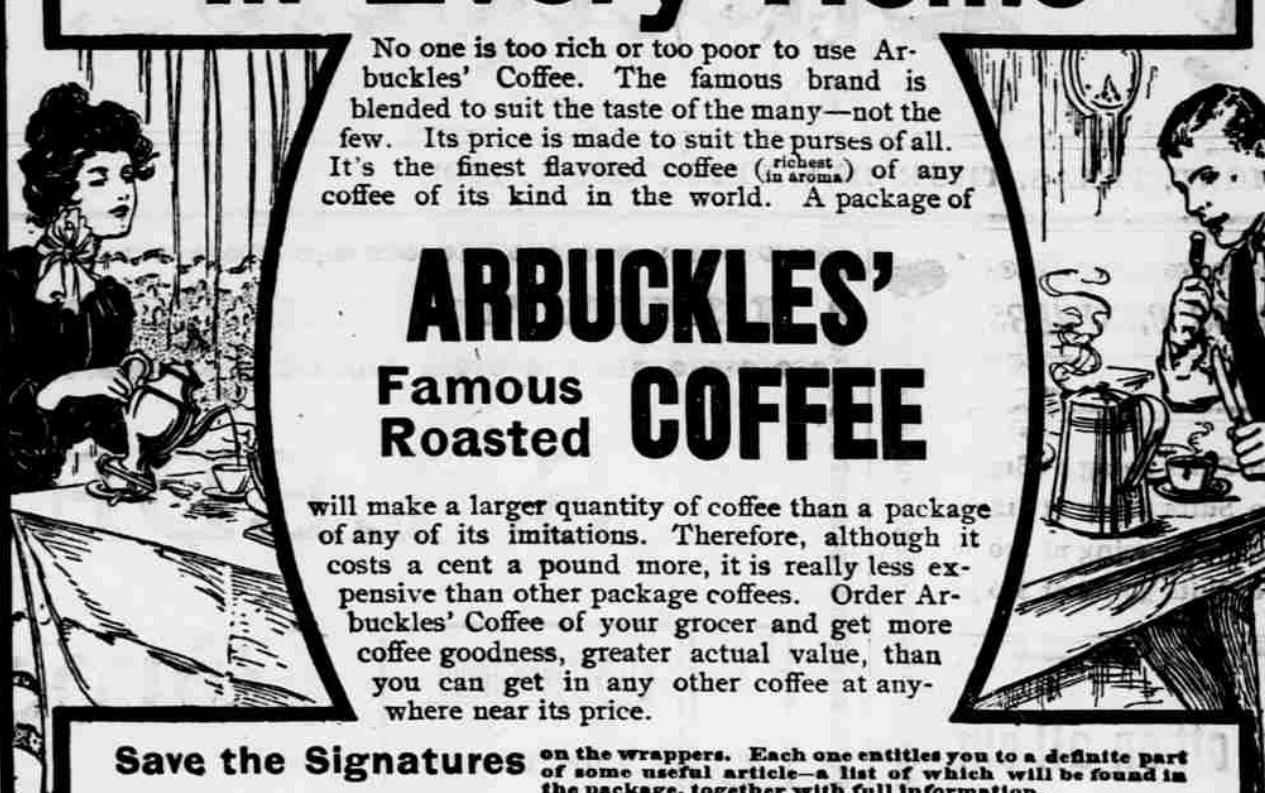
He sought to enlist capital and was fortunate in getting the ear of Guffey & Galey. What he had to tell them was enough to satisfy their far seeing vision and they joined him. Almost 4000 acres of land were leased and last fall the rotary drill was started.

The job was not without its troubles and drawbacks. But as the hole slowly crept down through clay and quicksand, Lucas found pyrites of iron in the sand. This inspired him with the belief that the chemical processes that had combined the iron with the impurities had done more harm than good and he pushed on. In this well it was oil he was after, and he was not disappointed. To Captain Lucas's knowledge of geology and his skill in applying it is due the discovery of this Texas field, just as to Guffey & Galey's good sense and judgment is due its early development. Yet if Joseph Jefferson had not wanted a mineral water, it is doubtful if Texas would have dreamed for many a year of this treasure. It is on such little things that fortune often turns. And even with their successes neither Lucas nor Jefferson got what he was after.

A certain sea faring man having some suggestions of "Billy Bones," who sailed with old Flint and Long John Silver, is in dispute with the oil colony from Pennsylvania.

He had been telling day after day of the oil spring out in the gulf and the underground river of oil that rises in the Rocky Mountains and flows through Beaumont and over to Trinidad make asphalt. He had anchored in the oil calms in the gulf and carried asphalt from Trinidad to New York, and it melted down on him and the cargo shifted and he put into Charles on in distress. And it was a beautiful story of a sea faring man. He knew the location of the spring in the gulf, which could be easily reached by a naphtha launch from Sabine Pass. So W. A. Denison, R. A. Fuller, E. N. Smith, R.

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ARBUCKLE BROS., Notion Dept., New York City, N. Y.

R. Armour, Dr. William B. Phillips and a dozen more planned a trip out to see it. They had every contingency provided for, but the minute the procession started prices commenced to rise. By the time they reached Sabine Pass, a dozen miles from the hotel, the two or three dollars which was to cover the cost of the trip per man was exhausted and the industrious launch owner refused to turn a wheel without \$25 in his hand. The oil men offered \$10, which was refused, and they struck and came back to the hotel disgusted with sea faring men. Captain Lucas says he has been out to the scene of the oil spring in the gulf and that it has long ago ceased to be visible, although he suspects that at one time it did exist.

It is singular what a hold that old subterranean stream of oil story has on these people. The native believes that a vast river runs beneath this vicinity flowing from a subterranean sea in the Rocky Mountains, and that the Lucas well hit the river. This stuff is telegraphed in all seriousness out to the papers elsewhere, and in the same seriousness is printed, not as an interesting joke, but as a scientific fact.

The formation is not the same here as at Corsicana up in the center of the state. John Galey, who is the only practical oil man who has full knowledge of this well, says he has no doubt that the well is in a large pool, but he thinks it absurd to even assume that the oil basin has risen enough in any portion to make this a gravity flow.

The Pennsylvania driller, who will come down here if the field develops what this well indicates, need bring none of his outfit. This work is rather hydraulic mining than drilling. His equipment will consist of a pump able to force water into a hole at a pressure of 200 pounds or more, an engine to drive his machines, a rotary machine to keep turning the drill pipe continuously and such accessories as this outfit demands. The derrick is built only 60 feet high, as there is no long string of tools to handle.

Now, while Texas is in many respects attractive, the number of saloons here, added to the excitement that is bound to follow if an oil boom comes, puts Sheridan's suggestion in the ranks of the needless. By living in Texas under the possible conditions, he would find it to be Hades as well. Then there are some gentlemen down this way quite accomplished in the polite art of gun play. And the colored brother has the reputation of abilities and taste in doing hand carving and tracery on his neighbor's skin with a razor. The first year of Beaumont as an oil town will not be monotonous.

This is a sportsman's paradise. Ducks, geese and other birds swarm in the marshes until to kill them looks like tame slaughter. The bayous and the lake are full of fish from the tarpon down. Gentlemen who want to "buck the tiger" also find its lair here, along with other entertainments of a similar sort.

Gardens are full of green stuff and flowers, and the hotel tables would be full of vegetables were it not for the fact that it pays better to ship it to the Yanks at the North than to feed it to him down here where other things divorce him from his money.

The black mud is a slimy stuff, and when it is moistened a little by a light rain, it is amusing to see the oil man try to keep his feet. Walking on it is like walking on a Pittsburg sidewalk on one of the icy mornings when sleet has covered the ground. Many a hard jolt has come from the lack of experience in walking on the slippery Texas mud. And it is not a nice thing to fall in, for it sticks like a cultivated sin.

Fuel is one of the drawbacks in drilling in this country. The delay caused by the sands makes rapid progress impossible and steam must be kept up to drive the rotary drill machine and also maintain the excessive water pressure in the pumps, which must keep up a steady stream of force and volume flowing into the pipes and back out the drilled hole. When men talk of sinking a well here in unusually short time because the ground is soft, it is wise to remember

there are liars everywhere. It took the Lucas well nearly three months to get down, and many a well will start that will never get down. Bion H. Butler.

MARKETING OF OIL.

Western (Cal.) Oil News. Nowhere is the value of organization seen more clearly than in the matter of marketing oil. The product of one well usually becomes insignificant when considered with the amount of oil required to satisfy the wants of even one big consumer.

As a consequence, the products of many wells must be pooled in order to market it to the best advantage. What is more important, this pooling of the oil makes prices stable. It also gives a new confidence to the consumer and assures him that he will not be disappointed in getting his fuel. Full 60 per cent of the production in the Los Angeles field have sold in advance to the Oil Storage and Transportation company.

The Rex Crude Oil company, Yukon Crude Oil company and the American Fuel Oil company recently signed contracts for their output for the next twelve months, insuring to the producer a return of practically one dollar per barrel net, which is a small reduction on the price realized for the past year. In this way the seller markets his oil in one channel and receives a regular monthly settlement on the 15th of each month.

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for the oil produced during the preceding month. It is known that there are about 20,000 barrels only of surplus oil in Southern California, which quantity is disposed of to one consumer, thus making the standard price to him for the coming year of about \$1.25 per barrel.

Sunset district producing companies are realizing about one dollar per barrel for oil in the field, but a considerable portion of it is used for new drilling, while quite a percentage goes to the refinery. Surplus oil is marketed on the outside and gives to the producer on the ground from 90 cents to \$1 a barrel.

SAFE FROM TRUSTS.

Western (San Francisco) Oil News. Manipulation of prices of California's oil product by the Standard Oil company, or any other refiner is impossible, for the simple reason that as the oil is largely used for fuel, the sale of the product to a refiner is not necessary. The oil goes from the producer to the consumer and is usually contracted for at the wells. The steamships, locomotives, machine shops, foundries and many other institutions which have until recently been consumers of coal, are now burning crude oil. And it is the practice of the consumer to the contract with the producer for the oil needed for periods of one to five years. Thus the Standard Oil company has made no effort whatever to control the price of crude oil in California. In consequence the price of oil has steadily increased with the increase in production, the larger output guaranteeing to consumers a constant supply and justifying them in making the necessary alterations in boilers, etc.

Recently there have been forty-eight oil companies incorporated in the California and Arizona field, with a capital stock of about 17,500,000.

EXPORT OF MEAT FROM URUGUAY.

Washington, D. C., February 7.—United States Consul Swalm at Montevideo, writes that the River Plate Fresh Meat company has contracted with the Royal Mail Steamship company to install in each of its steamers a chilling apparatus with a capacity of 1500 carcasses. Three thousand carcasses will be shipped to Southampton each month, the average voyage from the River Plate requiring about twenty two days. The cattle will be almost entirely grass fed and will make excellent beef. The number that can be so exported annually from Uruguay and Argentine approximate 10,000 head. As the class of cattle, including cross bred Hereford and short horn stock, slaughtered and shipped will not cost on an average about \$30 United States gold, per head, the River Plate countries will undoubtedly prove a strong competitor with the United States in English and other European markets.

Almost simultaneously with the death of Queen Victoria, The Outlook prints an article by Justin McCarthy, the author of "A Short History of Our Own Times," on the "Political Influence of Queen Victoria," accompanying the article with an excellent portrait, painted from life at Windsor Castle, by Mr. F. M. Bell Smith. Mr. McCarthy's article confirms the statement which has lately been made that the Queen took more than a formal interest in public affairs. Mr. McCarthy states very positively that the Queen very frequently "by a single pointed remark or question, would throw a disturbing doubt on the wisdom of some minor act or policy suggested for her approval," and he says that Victoria has "given to the world the best living illustration it has yet had of the part which the sovereign ought to play in a constitutional monarchy and a free country." In addition to this article, the February Magazine number of The Outlook gives an excellent portrait of the new King of England, and contains elaborate editorial estimates of the life of Queen Victoria and the history of England under her reign. \$3 a year. THE OUTLOOK CO., 287 Fourth avenue, New York.

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